

Message Text

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ACTION SS-25

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EXDIS

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR, TS, US, XF

SUBJECT: SENATOR PERCY AND PRIME MINISTER NOUIRA

DISCUSS MID-EAST

1. ACCOMPANIED BY AMBASSADOR MULCAHY I CALLED ON PRIME MINISTER HEDI NOUIRA AT 11:30AM, JULY 9 FOR A GOOD TALK OF ONE HOUR. PRESENT ALSO WAS PRIMIN'S CHEF DE CABINET HAMID ABED. EXCHANGES ON MID-EAST AND TUNISIAN ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT WERE THE CHIEF ITEMS DISCUSSED.

2. WHEN PRIMIN WELCOMED ME WARMLY HE SAID HE WAS GLAD MY DAUGHTER'S CHOICE OF TUNISIA IN PROJECT HOPE PROVIDED THE OCCASION OF MY PRIVATE VISIT HERE. I TOLD PRIMIN IT HAD BEEN TEN YEARS SINCE MY LAST VISIT AND THAT I WAS INDEED IMPRESSED WITH THE VISIBLE SIGNS OF ECONOMIC PROGRESS I HAD SEEN SINCE MY ARRIVAL WITH PHENOMENAL TOURISTIC DEVELOPMENT, CONSTRUCTION PROJECTS AT EVERY HAND, EVERY ECONOMIC INDICATOR POINTING TO SOLID GROWTH THAT HAD BEEN ACHIEVED UNDER THE GOT'S WISE ECONOMIC POLICIES DURING HIS TENURE. IT WAS ALREADY EVIDENT TO ME THAT TUNISIA HAD DEMONSTRATED ITS ABILITY ALSO TO RAISE THE PER CAPITA INCOME OF ITS PEOPLE, INSURING THAT ITS PROGRESS WAS BRINGING ITS BENEFITS TO THE GREAT MASS OF ITS PEOPLE.(DOUBLED SINCE 1970 TO ABOUT \$509).

3. I THEN SHIFTED OUR DISCUSSION TO PROBLEMS OF THE MID-EAST, TELLING PRIMIN THAT I WOULD VALUE HIS ADVICE AND COMMENTS
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ON WHAT COULD BE DONE TO MOVE SITUATION TOWARD A RESOLUTION,

PARTICULARLY ON WHAT HE THOUGH U.S. COULD DO TO HELP. HOW COULD THE CURRENT STALEMATE BE BROKEN? I MENTIONED GOT'S REALISTIC AND COURAGEOUS POLICY ENUNCIATED BY PRESIDENT BOURGUIBA IN HIS 1965 SPEECH TO THE PALESTINIANS AT JERICHO IN WHICH HE PUBLICLY RECOGNIZED EXISTENCE OF ISRAEL AS FACT OF LIFE.

4. PRIMIN RESPONDED THAT GOT HAD NOT CHANGED ITS POLICY FROM THAT TIME TO THIS: ISRAEL EXISTS; IT IS A LEGITIMATE CREATURE WHOSE BIRTH CERTIFICATE WAS SIGNED BY THE UNITED NATIONS. ISRAEL FROM 1947 TO 1967 HAD FIXED AND RECOGNIZED BORDERS. NEITHER GOT NOR ANY ARAB NATION COULD ASSENT TO ISRAEL'S TERRITORIAL INCREASES SINCE THAT TIME. IF ISRAEL AGREED TO WITHDRAW TO ITS PRE-1967 BORDERS, NOUIRA BELIEVED, MOST ARAB STATES WOULD CONCEDE HER LEGITIMACY. BUT ISRAEL WOULD HAVE TO RECOGNIZE THE JUSTICE OF PALESTINIAN CLAIMS TO A HOMELAND.

5. I TOLD PRIMIN THAT I FOUND HIS WORDS ENCOURAGING. I ALSO TOLD HIM THAT A YEAR AND A HALF AGO I HAD DISCUSSED THIS WITH RABIN, ALLON AND PERES, TELLING THEM THAT NO NATION MORE THAN ISRAEL SHOULD BE READY TO RECOGNIZE ANOTHER PEOPLE'S NEED FOR A HOMELAND. THEY REPLIED THAT THEY COULD BETTER CONSIDER THE PRINCIPLE OF A PALESTINIAN HOMELAND ONCE THE ARABS, INCLUDING THE PALESTINIANS, RECOGNIZED ISRAEL'S LEGITIMACY AND THE SANCTITY OF ITS BORDERS. THAT SITUATION IS UNCHANGED TODAY; BUT A CATALYST IS NEEDED TO BREAK THE IMPASSE.

6. NOUIRA THEN SAID THAT WHAT HE WOULD TELL THE PALESTINIANS IS THAT THEY SHOULD STUDY TUNISIA'S EXAMPLE BY SETTING THEMSELVES A LONG-TERM GOAL, SUCH AS A TRUE HOMELAND IN ANY OBTAINABLE TERRITORY ON ANY OBTAINABLE TERMS AND THEN RESOLVE THEMSELVES TO A PATIENT AND STEADY CAMPAIGN, WHICH MIGHT LAST ONE OR TWO GENERATIONS, UNTIL THEY COULD ACHIEVE THEIR REAL GOAL OF A HOMELAND. GIVEN TIME AND PATIENCE, HE FELT, THIS COULD BE ACHIEVED. THAT WOULD BE HIS ADVICE.

7. I TOLD THE PRIMIN I WONDERED WHAT YASSIR ARAFAT'S REACTION TO SUCH ADVICE WOULD BE TODAY. I RECALLED THAT AS A MEMBER OF USDEL AT UNGA WHEN ARAFAT APPEARED I SAW THE ISRAELIS

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AND AMERICAN JEWISH COMMUNITIES' COMPLETE DISMAY AT HIS CALL FOR A "SECULAR STATE" WHICH TO THEM MEANT JEWS LIVING UNDER THE DOMINATION OF AN ARAB MAJORITY. NOUIRA SAID HE DID NOT KNOW WHAT ARAFAT'S REACTION WOULD BE TODAY BUT HE RECALLED ARAFAT'S VISIT TO TUNIS EN ROUTE TO THE UNGA WHEN GOT URGED HIM TO MAKE A GESTURE OF CONCESSION TOWARD ISRAEL. ARAFAT HAD TRIED AND HIS "SECULAR STATE" PROPOSAL RESULTED. BUT TODAY, AFTER THE HORRIBLE EVENTS OF LEBANON,

NOUIRA SAID, HE THOUGHT THE PALESTINIAISN MIGHT BE MORE AMENABLE TO A GESTURE FROM ISRAEL, FILLED AS THEY WERE WITH DEJECTION AND DESPAIR.

8. THESE CIRCUMSTANCES, I SAID, MADE IT ALL THE MORE IMPERATIVE THAT PRESIDENT BOURGUIBA'S POLICY BE PUBLICLY REITERATED. SOME GESTURE FROM BOTH SIDES WAS NEEDED, I TOLD HIM, EVEN SUCH A THING AS THE PUBLICATION IN AN ARAB COUNTRY OF A MAP SHOWING ISRAEL IN ITS LEGITIMATE BORDERS (SOMETHING ALLON AND RABIN HAD BITTERLY COMPLAINED TO ME DID NOT EXIST). I LAUDED KING HASSAN'S SYMBOLIC GESTURE IN INVITING FOUR RABBIS TO COME TO MOROCCO FOR TALKS. THE VALUE AND IMPACT OF SUCH SYMBOLS SHOULD NOT BE UNDERESTIMATED. THEY WERE OF CONSIDERABLE PSYCHOLOGICAL IMPORTANCE.

9. NOUIRA SAID THAT IF HE HAD ONE REALLY SIGNIFICANT BIT OF ADVICE TO GIVE US IT WOULD BE TO RECOGNIZE THE IMPORTANCE OF A STABLE AND PEACEFUL EGYPT UNDER SADAT. THIS IS TO THE ISRAELI'S GREAT ADVANTAGE. NEXT, HE SAID, WOULD COME SOME ISRAELI GESTURE TOWARD A SETTLEMENT OF THE GOLAN HEIGHTS PROBLEM. SETTLE THAT, HE SAID, AND BOTH SYRIA AND EGYPT COULD BE COUNTED UPON TO LEAVE THE FRAY.

10. I QUICKLY APPLAUDED NOUIRA'S THOUGHTS REGARDING SYRIA, RECOUNTING PROPOSALS I HAD MADE FOR ISRAEL TO TURN OVER ITS MAPS OF MINE FIELDS IN THE GOLAN HEIGHTS TO SYRIA, TOTURN BACK THE AGRICULTURAL LANDS WHICH QUNETRA (KENETRA) NEEDED FOR ITS SUBSISTENCE AND EVEN TO AN ISRAELI GESTURE OF OFFERING TECHNICAL HELP IN REBUILDING THAT LEVELED CITY. (IT EXISTS TODAY AS A PROPAGANDA SHOWPIECE FOR SYRIA TO EXPLOIT.) ISRAEL COULD DEMAND A QUID PRO QUO.

11. AS WE WERE TO MEET AGAIN FOR DINNER THAT EVENING I
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ASKED THE PRIMIN TO GIVE SOME THOUGHT TO WHAT TUNISIA MIGHT DO IN THE PRESENT CIRCUMSTANCES TO COME UP WITH SOME SYMBOLIC GESTURE THAT MIGHT HELP MOVE THIS PROBLEM CLOSER TO A SOLUTION.

12.ACTION REQUESTED: I REQUEST, WITH DEPARTMENT'S CONCURRENCE, THAT COPIES OF THIS MESSAGE AND PREVIOUS MESSAGES FROM RABAT REPORTING MY TALKS IN MOROCCO BE PROVIDED TO SECRETARY RUMSFELD AND MR. BRENT SCOWCROFT.
MULCAHY

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